

The Strategic Use of American Democracy Promotion after the Cold War: The Clinton Administration

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ABSTRACT: The United States after the Cold War presents an ideal case for studying the use of democracy promotion as an instrument of foreign policy. Building on a long historical-ideational tradition, policy-makers developed a grand strategy that sought to harness the global spread of democratization in support of US strategic goals. Successive administrations have seen democratization as an important link in a chain of mutually reinforcing ideas about national interest, political order and international relations. In the 1990s, US policy-makers more than ever saw the spread of democracy as a win-win development – something normatively pleasing and producing tangible benefits for the United States. President Bill Clinton did not just go further than his predecessors in seeking to promote democratization, he also went further in explicitly doing this to promote fundamental US goals, as laid out in the strategy of democratic enlargement. It is therefore necessary to study US democracy promotion from the perspective of America's strategic goals and not just the goal of democratization. This paper investigates the relationship between global democratization, US democracy promotion and two US strategic goals – conflict-reduction and economic liberalization – during the Clinton administration. It finds that, while democracy promotion was entrenched in foreign policy rhetorically and institutionally, the record is mixed in terms of producing democratization outcomes. Testing the rationale of democratic enlargement, it also finds highly conflicting evidence about whether democratization matches conflict-reduction or economic liberalization, and also about whether US democracy promotion helps produce such outcomes by supporting democratization.

1. Introduction

The growth of democracy promotion (DP) in American foreign policy is one more expression of the persistent influence of liberal internationalist definitions of the country's role in the world.¹ The idea that the spread of US-style liberal democracy abroad is good for American interests as much as for the countries that embrace it is resilient. Well established strands of American political and strategic thinking coalesced in President Woodrow Wilson's seminal 'Fourteen Points' speech of 1918.² Liberal internationalism shaped American grand strategy after World War II and throughout the Cold War, with democratization abroad among the national interests pursued.³ Successive administrations saw democratization as an important link in a chain of mutually reinforcing ideas about political order and international relations.⁴ After the Cold War, US policymakers continued to take the spread of democracy as a win-win development: a foreign outcome that is normatively pleasing and also produces tangible benefits for the United States.⁵ This belief can also be understood in terms of an exceptionalism based on an 'American Creed' and of the related debate on realism versus idealism in foreign policy.⁶ This exceptionalism rests heavily on the self-image of the United States as a state deliberately founded on universal liberal democratic principles. This has influenced how Americans conceive the national interest, fuelled in them a universalist worldview, encouraged them to set strategic goals beyond narrow security and economic interests, and often led to the belief that any non-democratic regime is a threat to American values and institutions – and by extension to the country's identity itself.⁷ Thus in the supposed idealist-realist dichotomy the dividing line is blurred by the connection between America's ideals and its conceptions of national interest.

¹ For a long historical perspective, see Robert Kagan, *Dangerous Nation: America's Place in the World from its Earliest Days to the Dawn of the Twentieth Century* (New York, NY: Alfred A. Knopf, 2006), Adam Quinn, *US Foreign Policy in Context: National ideology from the Founders to the Bush Doctrine* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010).

² On Wilson's thinking as well as his legacy in foreign policy, see the essays in G. John Ikenberry, et al., *The Crisis of American Foreign Policy: Wilsonianism in the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton University Press, 2009).

³ The argument is well summed up – from a critical perspective – in Christopher Layne, *The Peace of Illusions: American Grand Strategy from 1940 to the Present* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2006).

⁴ The definitive account remains in Tony Smith, *America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994). See also G. John Ikenberry, 'America's Liberal Grand Strategy: Democracy and National Security in the Post-War Era', in M. Cox, G. J. Ikenberry, and T. Inoguchi (eds), *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

⁵ On the post-Cold War rise of democracy promotion in Washington, see Tony Smith, *A Pact with the Devil: Washington's Bid for World Supremacy and the Betrayal of American Promise* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007).

⁶ On the 'American Creed' and its relationship to foreign policy, see Samuel P. Huntington, *American Politics: The Promise of Disharmony* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 1981), pp. 24-30, 236-47.

⁷ Layne, *The Peace of Illusions*, pp. 118-22.

Because of the growing importance of democracy promotion in foreign policy – for the United States and also other established democracies – the question of strategy is important for more than just DP's impact on democratization. Since it is used as an instrument of foreign policy, it is necessary to study DP from a perspective that includes the promoters' overall strategic goals as well the narrow goal of democratization. This perspective must distinguish between the strategy *of* democracy promotion to secure national-interest goals and the strategy *for* democracy promotion to achieve democratization abroad. DP should be evaluated strategically on whether it helps to achieve the foreign-policy goals it is said to support as much as on whether it leads to democratization. That democratization is caused by a combination of factors that varies from case to case has slowed progress towards a general theory of the process.⁸ The difficulty of determining the role of external variables in particular has made a general theory of DP an even more remote prospect.⁹ Scholars generally agree that external factors play a supporting role at best in democratization. In fact, international factors can also threaten it.¹⁰ There is less agreement on the extent to which democratization also depends on the established democracies adopting the right promotion strategy.¹¹ Badly strategized, DP can even have perverse effects.¹² Strategy also matters because the effectiveness and legitimacy of DP are affected by its interplay with other foreign policy goals.¹³ Where it considers strategy the literature on democracy promotion tends to focus on the democratization side, i.e. on the strategy *for* DP. Only in an indirect way does this help our understanding of whether and how democracy promotion can support the foreign-policy goals of established democracies such as the United States, i.e. the strategy *of* DP.

The presidency of Bill Clinton provides an ideal case study for evaluating the American use of democracy promotion for strategic ends, with this strategy *of* DP best expressed in the concept of democratic enlargement. Even if Clinton's DP record is generally seen as mixed in terms of

⁸ For overviews of the study of democratization, see for example Barbara Geddes, 'What Do We Know About Democratization After Twenty Years?' *Annual Review of Political Science*, No. 2 (1999), Terry Lynn Karl, *From Democracy to Democratization and Back: Before 'Transitions from Authoritarian Rule'* (Stanford, CA: Centre on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law, 2005).

⁹ On the international dimensions of democratization and the role of outside agents, see for example Peter Burnell, (ed.) *Democracy Assistance: International Co-operation for Democratization* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), Michael McFaul, *The Missing Variable: The "International System" as the Link between Third and Fourth Wave Models of Democratization* (Stanford: Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law, 2006).

¹⁰ Such threats are outlined in Peter Burnell, *Promoting Democracy Backwards* (Madrid: Fundacion para las relaciones internacionales y el dialogo exterior, 2006).

¹¹ For the claim that it does, see for example Larry Diamond, *The Spirit of Democracy: The Struggle to Build Free Societies Throughout the World* (New York, NY: Times Books, 2008), pp. 314-44.

¹² Burnell, *Democracy Backwards*, Francis Fukuyama and Michael McFaul, *Should Democracy Be Promoted or Demoted?* (Muscatine, IA: The Stanley Foundation, 2007).

¹³ See for example Thomas Carothers, 'Promoting Democracy and Fighting Terror', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 82, No. 1 (2003), Thomas Carothers, 'The Backlash Against Democracy Promotion', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 2 (2006).

producing democratization outcomes, he entrenched DP in foreign policy – rhetorically and institutionally – more than any previous president.¹⁴ The importance of democratization in the post-Cold War era of globalization was a constant in the strategic thinking of his administration – before there was an attempt to express it formally through democratic enlargement and after that concept fell into disuse.¹⁵ The Clinton administration was also the first in half a century that did not inherit a ready-made grand strategic concept, containment having died with the Cold War. It therefore had considerable freedom in seeking a grand strategy that could more fully incorporate the historical tendency to view the national interest in terms of promoting American political values abroad. As a result, under Clinton the US government did not just go further in seeking to promote democratization abroad through its various institutions, it also went further in explicitly trying to use these efforts to promote strategic national-security and economic goals. In the post-Cold War years, traditional US strategic goals were re-interpreted as ensuring military superiority over any other potential superpower or combination of great powers, preventing the rise of a rival global hegemon and promoting a liberal democratic international order.¹⁶ In order to evaluate the strategic benefits of democratic enlargement and the role of DP within it, this paper concentrates on two US policy goals that flowed from the above, namely preventing regional instability and conflicts, and promoting economic liberalization.

The first section of the paper looks the development of democratic enlargement as a strategy. It reviews its influences, its goals and its implementation, as well as the reaction to it in foreign-policy circles. The second section reviews the DP policies of the Clinton administration and how they related to the implementation of democratic enlargement. The third section proposes a strategic evaluation of enlargement and the role of American DP within it. It assesses first the relationship between democratization trends with progress towards the two US goals mentioned above – reducing conflicts and promoting economic liberalization. ‘Democratization’ here refers only to the process through which states develop democratic forms of political order, with or without external influences. It does not refer to any transformative external agency. Focusing on democratization-as-process rather democracy-as-status is also consistent with seeking to understand if or how a process of change in one dimension (the political order of states) influences processes of change in other dimensions (the behaviour of states and relations

¹⁴ For an overview, see Thomas Carothers, *The Clinton Record on Democracy Promotion* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2000).

¹⁵ This case has been made convincingly in John Dumbrell, *Clinton's Foreign Policy: Between the Bushes, 1992-2000* (Routledge, 2009).

¹⁶ John Lewis Gaddis, *The United States and the End of the Cold War: Implications, Reconsiderations, Provocations* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1992), pp.194-95, 203-08, Ikenberry, 'America's Liberal Grand Strategy', p.108.

between them). And finally the third section looks at whether American DP under Clinton matches any progress with the two US goals considered.

2. The strategy of democratic enlargement

A grand strategy based on democratic enlargement was the post-Cold War manifestation of the lasting appeal of democracy promotion to American policy-makers. Bill Clinton and many of his advisers shared a worldview based on the impact of democratization on international relations that was grounded in a wide historical and intellectual context. The makers of American foreign policy historically have tended to insist that democracy promotion supports both the spread of their country's ideals and the achievement of its national-interest goals. They have also tended to see little contradiction between the two. By the 1990s, the experience of the 'Third Wave of Democratization' and the spreading notion that all countries have the potential to become democracies, the collapse of Communism and renewed interest in the democratic peace fuelled further the influence of liberal internationalist thinking that argued that it was in America's national interest to promote democratization, free trade and free markets together.¹⁷ This liberal conception of national interest and security in partly ideational terms is at the heart of understanding the American approach to DP.¹⁸ As constructivists argue, the ideas countries hold about their political identity are closely related to their conception of national interest and international relations.¹⁹ Inasmuch as the political identity of the United States is based on a foundational political order built on Enlightenment liberalism, its foreign policy has tended to reflect and promote these ideas. Along these lines, Peter Schraeder writes that how policy-makers define the national interest and how they relate it to the perceived instrumental benefits of democracy explains DP variations among countries. It also explains why American DP focuses on American-style liberalization abroad as it is seen as the best guarantee of domestic, and by extension international, stability and prosperity – and therefore of US security.²⁰

Before Clinton, a continuity between the Carter, Reagan and Bush administrations had already led to the adoption by the US foreign policy elite, as Edward Haley writes, of a post-Cold War

¹⁷ This is well mapped out by in Smith, *Pact with the Devil*, pp. 96-116.

¹⁸ Peter J. Schraeder, 'The State of the Art in International Democracy Promotion: Results of a Joint European-North American Research Network', *Democratization*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (2003).

¹⁹ See for example Quinn, *US Foreign Policy in Context*, p.20-21, John Gerard Ruggie, 'The Past as Prologue? Interests, Identity, and American Foreign Policy', *International Security*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (1997), p.120, John Gerard Ruggie, *Winning the Peace: America and World order in the New Era* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. 25.

²⁰ Schraeder, 'The State of the Art', p.35.

paradigm mixing traditional assumptions about exceptionalism, democratization and international relations with more topical concerns about American primacy and globalization.²¹ The Clinton administration's democratization interest was a continuation of this thinking on US foreign policy after the Cold War. If the United States had achieved primacy in all dimensions of power simultaneously²² or something close, the right strategy might prolong this situation into a truly hegemonic era. Despite some voices calling for isolationism or retrenchment, the strategic question boiled down to a choice between seeking an imperial or liberal hegemony. Faced with the combination of unchecked power and uncertainty about how to use it, policy-makers tapped into the liberal internationalist tradition and its DP component. Immediately before and then throughout the Clinton presidency, many made the mutually reinforcing arguments that US hegemony promoted international stability and that international stability would prolong US hegemony. From this it followed that DP should be a part of foreign policy since conventional wisdom held that democratization breeds international stability and peace. John Ikenberry clearly identifies why a liberal hegemonic project of the kind eventually pursued by the Clinton administration requires a focus on democratization.²³ Such a project was also enabled by neoconservative claims about American exceptionalism and the inseparability of American values, national security and international order.²⁴ This was the immediate context for the Clinton administration's attempt to develop and implement a grand strategy of democratic enlargement.

In the 1992 election campaign, Clinton vowed to make democracy a central part of his foreign policy. As he put it, 'it is more possible for us than ever before to be more consistent in the advocacy of freedom and democracy and human rights, and global economic growth based on market principles'.²⁵ Clinton set himself three national-security objectives: restructuring the military, working with allies to encourage global democratization and re-establishing economic leadership at home and in the world.²⁶ But in his first year in office Clinton's handling of crises from Somalia to Haiti and Bosnia. of these issues and his general approach to foreign policy led to accusations of incompetence and strategic incoherence.²⁷ The attempt to encapsulate the

²¹ P. Edward Haley, *Strategies of Dominance: The Misdirection of U.S. Foreign Policy* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2006).

²² As argued for example in Stephen G. Brooks and William C. Wohlforth, 'American Primacy in Perspective', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 4 (2002).

²³ See G. John Ikenberry, 'America's Imperial Ambition', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 81, No. 5 (2002), G. John Ikenberry, 'Liberal Hegemony or Empire? American Power in the Age of Unipolarity', in David Held and Mathias Koenig-Archibugi (eds), *American Power in the 21st Century* (Cambridge: Polity, 2004).

²⁴ Smith, *Pact with the Devil*, pp.26-29.

²⁵ 'Excerpts from Interview with Clinton on Goals for Presidency', *The New York Times*, 28 June 1992.

²⁶ Bill Clinton, *A New Covenant for American Security: Remarks to Students at Georgetown University* (1991).

²⁷ See for example Paul D. Wolfowitz, 'Clinton's First Year', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 1 (1994), p.30.

administration's worldview and international goals into a single concept that could be easily understood by all was to a great extent a reaction to this early criticism.

In the summer of 1993, Clinton charged National Security Advisor Anthony Lake with melding his three national-security objectives into one single strategic concept. The result was democratic enlargement. In the autumn, Clinton and the administration's foreign-policy principals delivered speeches outlining this concept in what amounted to the 'the self-conscious launch of a unified foreign policy frame.'²⁸ Lake is identified as the main architect of democratic enlargement, but the president embraced his ideas because they reflected his worldview, and because they echoed his aim of integrating economic interests within national security.²⁹ Enlargement fitted in with Clinton's primary goal of increasing US economic competitiveness and would allow him to claim to march towards that goal even when dealing with international affairs.³⁰ In various ways, the logic of enlargement was also endorsed by senior figures such as Vice President Al Gore, Ambassador to the UN (later Secretary of State) Madeleine Albright and Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott.³¹ In the following months, the enlargement concept provided the basis for the administration's *National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, which argued that 'All of America's strategic interests – from promoting prosperity at home to checking global threats abroad before they threaten our territory – are served by enlarging the community of democratic and free market nations.'³² Democracy concerns even permeated the debates on defence, with threats to democracy in the former Soviet Union and in the developing world included among the fundamental strategic dangers for the United States in the 'Bottom Up Review' of military goals and programmes in 1993.³³

Lake listed four goals for democratic enlargement in descending order of importance: strengthening the community of major market democracies as the core of the international system, helping consolidate new democracies and market economies – especially in crucial states,

²⁸ Kathryn M. Olson, 'Democratic Enlargement's Value Hierarchy and Rhetorical Forms: An Analysis of Clinton's Use of a Post-Cold War Symbolic Frame to Justify Military Interventions', *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 34, No. 2 (2004), p.313.

²⁹ Douglas Brinkley, 'Democratic Enlargement: The Clinton Doctrine', *Foreign Policy*, No. 106 (1997), pp.116-17.

³⁰ Emily O. Goldman and Larry Berman, 'Engaging the world—First impressions of the Clinton foreign policy legacy', in Colin Campbell and Bert A. Rockman (eds), *The Clinton legacy* (New York: Chatham House, 2000), pp.237-38.

³¹ Brinkley, 'Democratic Enlargement', pp. 120-21, Carothers, *The Clinton Record*, p. 5, Derek Chollet and James Goldgeier, *America between the Wars, 11/9 to 9/11: The Misunderstood Years between the Fall of the Berlin Wall and the Start of the War on Terror* (New York, NY: Public Affairs, 2008), pp.62-68, Strobe Talbott, 'Democracy and the National Interest', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 75, No. 6 (1996).

³² *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, (Washington, DC: The White House, 1995), p.22.

³³ Larry Berman and Emily O. Goldman, 'Clinton's foreign policy at midterm', in Colin Campbell and Bert A. Rockman (eds), *The Clinton presidency: First appraisals* (Chatham, NJ: Chatham House, 1996), p.302.

countering the aggression of states hostile to market democracy and supporting their liberalization, and finally providing aid and reform assistance in democracy and market economics to regions of greatest humanitarian concern.³⁴ The highest priority would be given to a core of America's European and Asian democratic allies, followed by the new democracies in the former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe and Asia. Then would come the Americas and, across all regions, countries that could act as democratizing 'beachheads' by virtue of their regional influence. The next level consisted of non-democracies with the potential to act as 'backlash' states. As for the means of implementation, however, the strategy of democratic enlargement was vague. How to strengthen the community of democracies, foster new market democracies and deal with 'backlash' states required considerable fleshing out. Only the redefinition of humanitarian aid through democracy assistance and support for economic reforms pointed to a relatively clear set of policies, many of which had emerged through the attempts of previous administrations at DP. With market capitalism as a thread between the goals of enlargement, economic policy provided a convenient tool for supporting the strategy, especially given its closeness to Clinton's ultimate goal of national economic renewal.³⁵ The fact that Clinton's first NSS listed enlargement after economic prosperity also implied that it would be selectively pursued and that decisions would be influenced by economic considerations. Otherwise, democratic enlargement as outlined revealed little about how American diplomacy, military power and economic clout could be put to the service of its goals.

Democratic enlargement had a clear rationale but how would it guide decision-making in the short and medium term? It may have offered a relatively clear view of country and regional priorities, but little by way of which concrete policies to apply to them. In the first two tiers of Lake's priorities – Europe, Asia, Russia and the former Soviet republics – US diplomacy tried to institutionalize an international order based on a web of security and economic arrangements, while stressing that democracy provided the best cement between its building blocks. America pushed for including the new democracies of Central and Eastern Europe in NATO, and encouraged their accession to the European Union. It strove to add Russia to the G7 and other international bodies. American engagement in multilateral institutions was justified not only in security or economic terms, but also by the all-encompassing rationale of enlargement. Diplomatic efforts in relation to institutions such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation and

³⁴ Anthony Lake, 'From Containment to Enlargement: Address at the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington DC, September 21, 1993', *U.S. Department of State Dispatch*, Vol. 4, No. 39 (1993).

³⁵ Berman and Goldman, 'Clinton's foreign policy', pp.302-03.

the Organization of American States were intended in part to promote the spread and consolidation of democratization. To a certain extent, American international economic policy was also geared to support also the goals of democratic enlargement – as Douglas Brinkley argues, because above all ‘enlargement was about spreading democracy through promoting the gospel of geoeconomics’.³⁶ Enlargement could therefore also be part of the diversification of US economic policy away from its traditional focus on Europe and Asia, and towards countries of future strategic importance. Pivotal ‘emerging markets’ given priority in economic policy because they were regional drivers in both economic and security issues were also targeted in DP.³⁷ The administration’s trade policy, bilateral and on NAFTA and the GATT Uruguay Round agreement, was also justified as supporting the goals of democratic enlargement. As for America’s military power, some wondered whether it could be used in support of enlargement, either by facilitating humanitarian intervention or as an instrument of pressure on autocratic regimes – but the administration found out that practice was more complex than theory. America’s development aid – increasingly re-conceptualized in more explicitly political terms³⁸ – also provided an avenue for achieving the goals of enlargement. And finally the growing toolbox of American democracy promotion provided the most obvious instrument for supporting enlargement.

Democratic enlargement was not well received. The administration’s was criticized for the scope of its ambitions and the discrepancy with its attempts to cut military spending.³⁹ John Dumbrell writes: ‘As a rhetorical successor to containment, of course, “enlargement” was a flop.’⁴⁰ Criticism was not limited to outsiders; Secretary of State Warren Christopher and the State Department were believed to be unenthusiastic, especially because of the prominence of trade policy at the expense of diplomacy.⁴¹ Clinton himself did not make a sustained effort to promote it as a central element of his presidency, a task complicated by the difficulty of selling a strategy that was not based on a clearly identifiable threat. It was easier for the administration to push for enlargement-related policies where the stakes and rewards were more easily understood, such as

³⁶ Brinkley, 'Democratic Enlargement', p.125.

³⁷ Ibid., pp.116-18, I.M. Destler, 'Foreign Economic Policy Making Under Bill Clinton', in James M. Scott (ed.), *After the End: Making U.S. Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), p.94.

³⁸ See for example Carol Lancaster, *Transforming Foreign Aid: United States Assistance in the 21st Century* (Institute for International Economics, 2000), pp.17-28.

³⁹ Brinkley, 'Democratic Enlargement', p.119, David C. Hendrickson, 'The Democratist Crusade: Interventions, Economic Sanctions, and Engagement', *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 4 (1994/1995), pp.22-29, Alvin Z. Rubinstein, 'The new moralists on a road to hell', *Orbis*, Vol. 40, No. 2 (1996).

⁴⁰ John Dumbrell, *Evaluating the Foreign Policy of President Clinton – or, Bill Clinton: Between the Bushes* (British Library: Eccles Centre for American Studies, 2005), p.7.

⁴¹ Brinkley, 'Democratic Enlargement', pp.121-22.

in Russia, than in relation to rogue states and developing nations.⁴² The administration soon seemed to have lost interest in its own strategy and continued to conduct foreign policy in a highly pragmatic way. Enlargement also faded as an explicit strategy because it could not produce short-term results and appeared inadequate in the face of different security threats, and ultimately too because doubts were raised about the link between democratization and peace.⁴³ In the words of Richard Haass, it 'had a negligible impact on day-to-day affairs [and] it has provided few policy-relevant guidelines for pressing foreign policy problems'.⁴⁴ The downgrading of enlargement was further driven by the administration's gradual shift away from multilateralism and towards bilateral deals and special strategic relationships.⁴⁵ Thus democratic enlargement as an explicit guide to decision-making had a relatively short shelf-life. That is not to say that its ideational content lost its influence on Clinton's foreign policy altogether.

Though Clinton and his aides downplayed democratic enlargement within months of its unveiling, its core elements remained influential until he left office. In his second term Clinton was perhaps less given to grandiose pronouncements about building a democratic world,⁴⁶ and focused more on security issues, but as Dumbrell remarks, 'the foundational, optimistic commitment to democratising globalisation remained.'⁴⁷ Secretary of State Albright also pushed harder than her predecessor for attention to democracy ideas in foreign policy. The second term was more focused on security issues, terrorism, international finance and regionalism.⁴⁸ In addressing these issues, however, the logic of democratic enlargement was visible, albeit with a greater emphasis on free markets and economic globalization.⁴⁹

3. The place of democracy promotion in democratic enlargement

One of the Clinton administration's fundamental challenges in the implementation of democratic enlargement was to use democracy promotion in support of US strategic goals. According to the logic of enlargement, democratization around the world would lead to favourable strategic outcomes for the United States, and the behaviour of democratizing states would be more

⁴² Goldman and Berman, 'Engaging the world', p.40.

⁴³ Ibid., pp.228-36, Lee Marsden, *Lessons from Russia: Clinton and US Democracy Promotion* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005).

⁴⁴ Richard N. Haass, 'Fatal distraction: Bill Clinton's foreign policy', *Foreign Policy*, No. 108 (1997), p.112.

⁴⁵ Goldman and Berman, 'Engaging the world', pp.245-46.

⁴⁶ Moises Naim, 'Clinton's foreign policy: A victim of globalization?' *Foreign Policy*, Winter 1997/1998, p.44.

⁴⁷ Dumbrell, *Clinton's Foreign Policy*, pp.168-69.

⁴⁸ Goldman and Berman, 'Engaging the world', pp.236-37.

⁴⁹ John Dumbrell, 'Was There a Clinton Doctrine? President Clinton's Foreign Policy Reconsidered', *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2002), pp.47-49.

supportive of these outcomes. A corollary was that DP could both foster democratization and lead the behaviour of its target states to align with the strategic outcomes sought by the United States. Here DP is defined as the widest possible range of actions that one state can take to influence the political development of another towards greater democratization. Figure 1 presents a ‘Democracy Promotion Scale’ reflecting this definition.⁵⁰ As shown, DP is differentiated from democracy assistance.

Figure 1: The Democracy Promotion Scale

Intervention/Coercion						
<i>Lower</i>						<i>Higher</i>
Diplomacy, exhortation and democratic example	Democracy Assistance: Capacity-building aid to actors and institutions	Political conditionality to diplomatic/economic relationships or membership of international institutions	Economic and other sanctions	Direct support for democracy forces and actors	Covert and paramilitary intervention	Military intervention and occupation

In this policy field, the Clinton team inherited from previous administrations a set of instruments designed precisely to achieve the goals included in democratic enlargement. As a result, the American state and non-state DP apparatus received a substantial and unprecedented boost between 1993 and 2000. For the enlargement goal of strengthening the community of democracies, the most obvious DP policies were traditional diplomacy and political conditionality in an institutional context since the goal concerned states that were democratic to some extent at least. Fostering new market democracies required the addition of policies of democracy assistance and direct support to democracy actors, on the basis that they would also target those likely to be economic liberalizers too. In the case of countering backlash states and promoting their liberalization, the policies above might also apply but faced barriers since these states were less likely to be amenable to them. Therefore, more coercive policies such as sanctions or even intervention might also have to be considered. For the final enlargement goal of providing aid and reform assistance to places of greatest humanitarian concern, democracy assistance was the logical policy, or perhaps a variant stressing different aspects of state-capacity-building alongside more traditional development aid.

⁵⁰ The Democracy Promotion Scale presented in Figure 1 is adapted from Peter Burnell, 'Democracy Assistance: The State of the Discourse', in Peter Burnell (ed.), *Democracy Assistance: International Co-operation for Democratization* (London: Frank Cass, 2000), pp.7-11, Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999), p.88, Schraeder, 'The State of the Art', pp.26-27.

Bill Clinton did more than any previous president to institutionalize democracy promotion in different agencies of the US government. His administration created DP positions in the State Department and the Agency for International Development (USAID), set up inter-agency groups to co-ordinate democracy programmes and policies, and made DP one of the strategic priorities of the international affairs budget.⁵¹ Secretary of State Christopher argued that ‘A strategic approach to promoting democracy requires that we coordinate all our leverage, including trade, economic and security assistance, and debt relief.’⁵² Throughout Clinton’s first term, Christopher tried to overhaul the institutional capacity to deliver this assistance, e.g. through the new position of Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. The Foreign Affairs Reform and Restructuring Act of 1998 completed the reshaping of the delivery of democracy assistance within the State Department. An Interagency Working Group on Democracy was set up under the leadership of the Assistant Secretary of State for DHRL. An office for democracy affairs was created in the National Security Council. In the Defense Department, a new position of Assistant Secretary for Democracy and Peacekeeping was mooted, but never filled after the first nominee was effectively blocked in Congress. The department did incorporate democracy elements in some of its activities, however. DP was also further institutionalized in non-state (but state-supported) institutions such as the National Endowment for Democracy. During the Clinton years, the role of the NED grew, especially through its continued support for campaigners in ‘difficult’ countries where US government agencies were less able to operate. The Eurasia Foundation was launched in 1993, partly funded by USAID, and became a notable provider of support for economic reform and democratic-institution-building in the former Soviet states. USAID’s role as the main state provider of democracy assistance grew. The Peace, Prosperity and Democracy Act of 1994 listed democratization as one of four interrelated objectives of American aid. Under the Act, USAID democracy assistance was budgeted through two titles, one for less developed countries and one for countries not eligible for development aid, which included the former Soviet republics as well as countries of Central and Eastern Europe, and specific ‘countries in transition’ from civil conflict or where democracy was challenged.⁵³

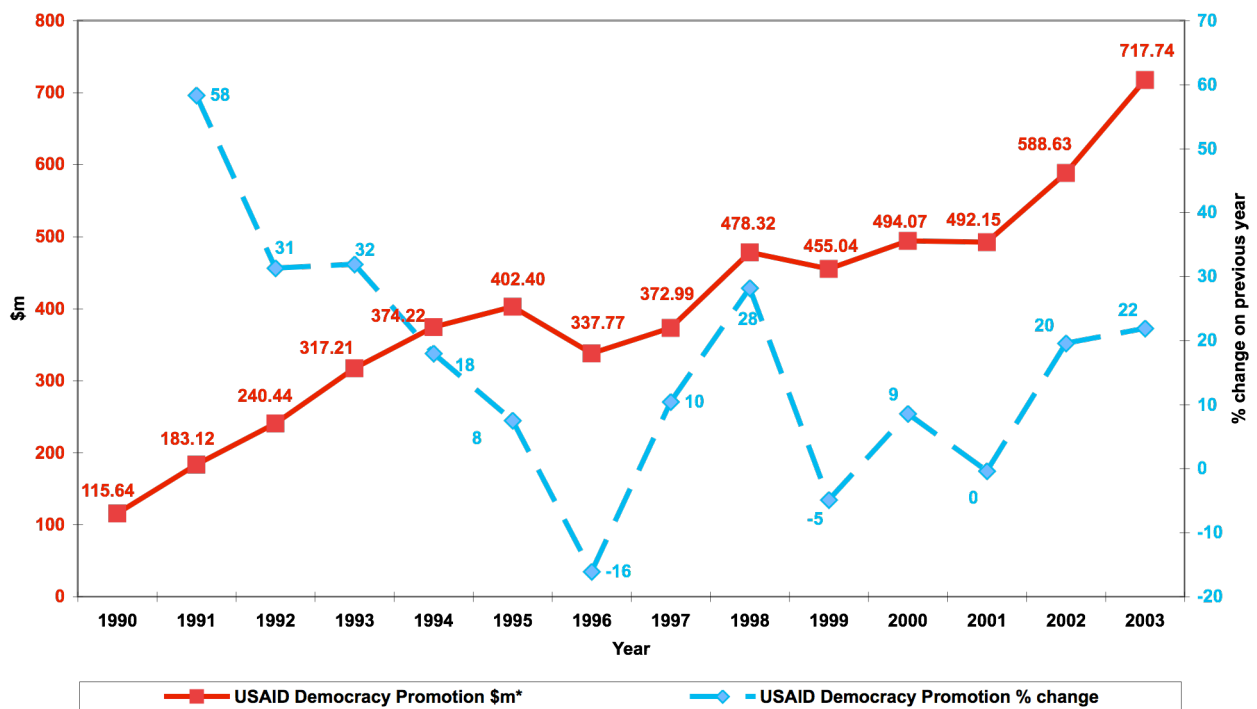
⁵¹ Carothers, *The Clinton Record*, p.4. A early and detailed overview of the administration’s efforts is found in Larry Diamond, *Promoting Democracy in the 1990s: Actors and Instruments, Issues and Imperatives. A Report to the Carnegie Commission on Preventing Deadly Conflict* (New York, NY: Carnegie Corporation of New York, 1995).

⁵² Warren Christopher, *In the Stream of History: Shaping Foreign Policy for a New Era* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1998), p.28.

⁵³ Diamond, *Report to the Carnegie Commission*.

USAID's spending on 'Democracy and Governance' programmes is indicative of the administration's overall efforts. Figure 2 shows its evolution, calculated in constant 1995 dollars, in absolute terms. Spending rose steadily from \$117m in 1990 to \$494m in 2000, with especially large annual increases in 1991–94 and in 1997–98. These growth spurts were followed by retrenchments in 1996 and 1999. Latin America & the Caribbean received by far the greatest share in 1990 with almost 73% while all other regions had small shares ranging from 1.7% to 11.7%. By the mid-1990s, spending by region had converged, however. In 2000, the regional spread of the share of USAID democracy assistance had narrowed, ranging from 10.6% for the Middle-East & Mediterranean to 21.4% for Europe.

Figure 2. USAID Democracy Assistance Spending, Worldwide, 1990-2003.



Source: *Cross-National Research on USAID's Democracy and Governance Programs*. (Reports and dataset available at www.pitt.edu/~politics/democracy/democracy.html)

Despite these efforts, reviews of Clinton's democracy promotion are mixed as far as its impact on democratization abroad is concerned. For John Dumbrell, 'Clinton's rhetorical commitment to democracy promotion was frequently weak and confused: not only in its often glib identification of economic and political freedom, but also in its tendency to exalt often superficial democratic features (regular elections, the existence of some kind of legitimate opposition) over genuine

societal pluralism.⁵⁴ Thomas Carothers offers a typical balance sheet for Clinton's DP. On the positive side, in some cases it was incorporated as a mutually reinforcing goal alongside security and economic goals, diplomatic involvement at some critical junctures helped protect democracy, and aid programmes targeting electoral assistance, media freedom and civil society made a small but real impact in many countries. On the negative side, democratization was usually downplayed where it conflicted with economic and security interests, thus weakening the credibility of American DP overall, and the administration failed to act consistently with its democracy rhetoric in many cases.⁵⁵ Carothers argues that institutionalized DP worked well where the goal of American diplomacy was clearly to support democratization, but there were several instances where the DP bureaucracy's goals strayed from the overall diplomatic line, creating problems of coherence.⁵⁶ Russian democratization was the crucial case for the Clinton administration and here Lee Marsden provides a comprehensive critique that American DP was flawed and counterproductive. He also argues that different agencies contributed to implementation in the country without any apparent co-ordinated strategy.⁵⁷ This supports Larry Diamond's assertion that 'One of the greatest handicaps to the effective exercise of US diplomacy and aid for democracy promotion has been inconsistency across different policy centers and in the treatment of different regimes.'⁵⁸ In Marsden's view, this was the case in Russia where aid for economic liberalization spearheaded by the Treasury Department is argued to have undermined efforts by others at supporting democratic reforms. A more recent assessment, however, has been more praising of the Clinton administration's efforts in Russia and the former USSR.⁵⁹

The impact of the increased spending on DP is the subject of debate. One study of democracy assistance by the NED in the 1990s finds that it had little impact on democratization.⁶⁰ A large-scale quantitative survey, however, finds a positive effect of USAID democracy assistance. For the period from 1990 to 2003, the project on 'Cross-National Research on USAID's Democracy and Governance Programs' finds that this spending had a small but consistent and statistically

⁵⁴ Dumbrell, *Evaluating the Foreign Policy*, p.7.

⁵⁵ Carothers, *The Clinton Record*, pp.2-8.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p.4.

⁵⁷ Marsden, *Lessons from Russia*, pp.22-23, 131-56.

⁵⁸ Larry Diamond, 'Promoting Democracy in the 1990s: Actors, Instruments, and Issues', in Axel Hadenius (ed.), *Democracy's Victory and Crisis: Nobel Symposium 1994* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), p.351.

⁵⁹ David W. Rivera and Sharon Werning Rivera, 'Yeltsin, Putin, and Clinton: Presidential Leadership and Russian Democratization in Comparative Perspective', *Perspectives on Politics*, Vol. 7, No. 3 (2009).

⁶⁰ James M. Scott and Carrie A. Steele, 'The Nature and Impact of Democracy Support by the United States National Endowment for Democracy, 1990-99', *Democratization*, Vol. 12, No. 4 (2005).

significant positive impact on democratization.⁶¹ The survey's authors note that this impact was especially noticeable in Africa, but also that Eurasia received increasing amounts of assistance without showing any democratization. They also caution that the potential effect of this assistance must be viewed in the context of democracy spending of an average of only \$2.6 million per country per year, with the bulk going to a handful of cases.

The institutionalization of US democracy promotion, especially in the form of democracy assistance, may have been the most noticeable Clinton legacy in this field, but how the administration reacted to democratization crises and breakthroughs around the world is an equally important consideration. In several countries of high or middling strategic importance to the United States, such as Egypt, Indonesia, Nigeria and Pakistan, the Clinton record is very mixed in terms of reacting to democratization developments. But it is particularly so in the case of Russia where Clinton's decision to 'bet the ranch' on President Boris Yeltsin as the best hope for reforms and US interests led to acquiescence to his several violations of democratic principles. During Yeltsin's confrontations with the Russian parliament and the opposition parties in 1993, and during the flawed elections of 1996, Clinton backed him fully in contradiction of his own rhetoric.⁶² The United States also took a generally weak position with regard to democratic backsliding in the other former Soviet republics after their transitions in the early 1990s. Only towards the end of Clinton's presidency did America take a somewhat harder line with their autocratic rulers.⁶³ In Serbia and Peru, Washington was tolerant towards their autocratic rulers for several years because it needed their co-operation, and only when strategic circumstances change did the administration eventually support democratizing forces against them. In Africa, the administration also maintained good relationships with so-called 'soft authoritarian' rulers in Ethiopia, Rwanda and Uganda. The record is better in Latin America, where the United States had a history of supporting autocrats, with the administration helping forestall coups against democratically elected rulers and resolve constitutional crises in Guatemala, Paraguay and Ecuador. In Haiti, despite flawed attempts at DP, the Clinton administration took a relatively consistent pro-democracy line with regard to the ongoing political

⁶¹ The first phase of the project led to the publication an initial report: Steven E. Finkel, Anibal Pérez-Liñán, and Mitchell E. Seligson, *Effects of U.S. Foreign Assistance on Democracy Building: Results of a Cross-National Quantitative Study* (USAID, Vanderbilt University, University of Pittsburgh, 2006). The second phase of the project – with additional data and coverage extended to 2004 – led to the publication of a final report: Steven E. Finkel, *et al.*, *Deepening Our Understanding of the Effects of US Foreign Assistance on Democracy Building* (USAID, University of Pittsburgh, Vanderbilt University, Latin American Public Opinion Project, 2008). Reports and dataset are available at www.pitt.edu/~politics/democracy/democracy.html

⁶² James M. Goldgeier and Michael McFaul, *Power and Purpose: U.S. Policy Toward Russia after the Cold War* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2003), pp.119-56, Marsden, *Lessons from Russia*, pp.79-90.

⁶³ Carothers, *The Clinton Record*, p.3.

problems. As Carothers concludes, the selective and varying attitude of the Clinton administration to democratization developments in these countries was due to more than a ‘semi-realism’. It was also often a reaction to changes in the international security environment, or an attempt to catch up with events on the ground, or the result of a change of personnel in Washington.⁶⁴ Carothers also notes that even where American ‘high policy’ was to accommodate autocrats, a ‘low policy’ of some engagement with opposition forces was in play through institutions such as the NED.⁶⁵

As many students of DP have noted, it notoriously difficult to find clear causal relations between policy (especially that of a single state within what can be a crowded field) and democratization progress. The above section has presented a broad evaluation of the Clinton administration DP record in its different dimensions. The focus of this paper being the strategy *of* democracy promotion by the United States, the next section addresses whether DP within the framework of democratic enlargement matched in any way the foreign policy goals set for it.

4. The strategic impact of democratic enlargement and US democracy promotion

The strategic impact of democratic enlargement must be measured by whether its core assumptions were confirmed by international developments during the Clinton years and by whether the policies derived from these assumptions helped deliver the desired strategic benefits to the United States. This section argues that America found itself faced with very conflicting evidence as to whether democratization and democracy promotion promote the fulfilment of its strategic goals.

The fundamental assumption of democratic enlargement was about the positive impact of democratization on US strategic goals. Using Freedom House and Polity IV data as indicators of democratization,⁶⁶ this is tested here against the goals of conflict-reduction and the promotion of

⁶⁴ Ibid., pp.2-5.

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.4.

⁶⁶ This paper uses a constructed Freedom House (FH) index with country scores ranging from 1 (lowest level of liberal democracy) to 13 (highest), and a Polity IV (P4) index with country scores from -10 (full autocracy) to +10 (full democracy). Data and definitions available at www.freedomhouse.org and www.systemicpeace.org/polity/polity4.htm

economic liberalization. Conflict data is taken from the Armed Conflict Dataset⁶⁷ and the Militarized Interstate Dispute (MID) Dataset.⁶⁸ Two indicators are used for economic liberalization. First, the Heritage Foundation's Economic Freedom Index (which data begin in 1995, missing the first two years of the Clinton presidency).⁶⁹ Second, gross private capital flows as percentage of a country's GDP.⁷⁰ The dependent variable data used extend beyond the end of the Clinton presidency, up to 2003 in some cases, to allow for consideration of lag effects in DP.

Between 1990 and 2003, there were consistent and gradual increases in the worldwide mean scores for both democratization indicators and most regions recorded a relatively small and gradual increase. As shown in Table 1, on both indicators, Africa records the largest increase while only Eurasia (i.e. Russia and the former Soviet republics⁷¹) has a fall. The Middle East & Mediterranean was the most static region in terms of democratization: slightly down on the FH index but slightly up on the P4 index. There is no great discrepancy between the evolution of the FH and the P4 index scores for each region. The evidence of an increase in democratization worldwide and in most regions throughout the 1990s allows for an evaluation of the core assumption of democratic enlargement.

Table 1. Comparison of Freedom House index and Polity IV index, 1990-2003.

	Period change in FH index	Period change in P4 index
WORLD	0.99	2.58
Africa	2.24	5.89
Asia	0.65	1.97
Eurasia*	-1.38	-1.00
Europe	0.88	0.98
L. America & Car.	0.24	1.04
M. East & Med.	-0.13	0.54

*Source: Freedom House, Polity IV. * Eurasia 1991-2003*

⁶⁷ [UCDP/PRIO Armed Conflict Dataset](http://www.prio.no/CSCW/Datasets/Armed-Conflict/UCDP-PRIO/), Uppsala Conflict Data Program, Uppsala University, and Centre for the Study of Civil War at the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo.

(<http://www.prio.no/CSCW/Datasets/Armed-Conflict/UCDP-PRIO/>) See also Nils Peter Gleditsch, *et al.*, 'Armed Conflict 1946–2001: A New Dataset', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 39, No. 5 (2002).

⁶⁸ [Militarized Interstate Dispute Data, version 3.02](http://www.correlatesofwar.org/), Correlates of War 2 Project, Pennsylvania State University (<http://www.correlatesofwar.org/>) See also Faten Ghosn, Glenn Palmer, and Stuart Bremer, 'The MID3 Data Set, 1993–2001: Procedures, Coding Rules, and Description', *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 21 (2004).

⁶⁹ Data and definitions available at <http://www.heritage.org/Index/Download.aspx>

⁷⁰ World Bank data on private capital flows is taken from the project on Cross-National Research on USAID's Democracy and Governance Programs. (Dataset available at www.pitt.edu/~politics/democracy/democracy.html)

⁷¹ Excluding Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Table 2 shows a comparison of the two conflict indicators in terms of their overall mean for the period covered and the general trend observed throughout. For the Armed Conflict Dataset (ACD), which records conflict episodes for which there are 25 battle-deaths or more in any given year, there is a worldwide downwards trend in the mean number of episodes-per-state/year for the period. Only Africa has a – slight – upwards trend, while Asia has the highest regional mean. The Militarized Interstate Disputes (MID) dataset includes episodes ranging from ‘no fatalities’ to ‘fatalities not exceeding 999 battle deaths’.⁷² Looking here at new-MIDs-per-state/year (i.e. MIDs beginning or occurring entirely in any given calendar year) in order to help comparison with the ACD data, which only reflect in-year episodes, there is a worldwide upwards trend in the annual mean number from between 1990 and 2001 (the last year for which data are available). Only the Middle East & Mediterranean register a downwards trend during the period. Eurasia is the region with the highest mean number of new-MIDs-per-state/year for the period. In both indicators, Latin America & the Caribbean has the lowest mean. As shown in Table 2, the tendency is for the period means to be higher in the case of MIDs (with Africa and Asia as the exceptions). Regional-level trends for armed conflicts episodes during the period are generally downwards (with Africa and Europe as exceptions) while those for MIDs are up in every instance bar one.

Table 2. Comparison of ACD and MID conflict data.

	ACD		MIDs	
	Period mean	Period trend	Period mean	Period trend
WORLD	0.28	Down	0.42	Up
Africa	0.32	Slightly Up	0.27	Up
Asia	0.68	Down	0.60	Up
Eurasia	0.23	Down	0.76	Up
Europe	0.14	Slightly Down	0.50	Up
L. America & Car.	0.09	Down	0.20	Up
M. East & Med.	0.35	Down	0.56	Down

Source: UCDP/PRIO, Correlates of War Project.

⁷² The MID dataset records cases ‘in which the threat, display or use of military force short of war by one member state is explicitly directed towards the government, official representatives, official forces, property, or territory of another state’. Daniel M. Jones, Stuart A. Bremer, and J. David Singer, ‘Militarized Interstate Disputes, 1816-1992: Rationale, Coding Rules, and Empirical Patterns’, *Conflict Management and Peace Science*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (1996), p.168.

The evolution in the economic liberalization indicators are summarized in Table 3. At the global level, there was a small increase in the mean level of the Economic Freedom Index between 1995 and 2003. Eurasia shows the most pronounced increase (narrowing the gap with other regions after starting as a relative laggard when the Soviet Union collapsed), while Asia and the Middle East & Mediterranean regressed during the period. The world mean of gross private capital flow as a share of GDP rose more sharply between 1990 and 2002. Here the disparities among regions are starker with the Middle East & Mediterranean, Europe and, to a lesser extent, Eurasia clearly outperforming the other regions; and none regressing.

Table 3. Comparison of Economic Freedom Index (1995–2003) and gross private capital flow as percentage of GDP (1990–2002).

	Period change in Economic Freedom Index	Period change in gross private capital flow as % of GDP
World	1.1	34.3
Africa	1.6	2.2
Asia	-2.7	4.5
Eurasia	10.2	15.1
Europe	5.6	25.3
L. America & Car.	2.5	3.8
M. East & Med.	-3.6	55.1

Source: Heritage Foundation, World Bank.

Overall, based on this summary of the conflict and economic liberalization indicators, some developments conform to the core assumption of democratic enlargement about the link between democratization, peace and economic liberalization. But clearly others do not conform. At the global level, there are simultaneous rises in the indicators for democratization, economic freedom and private capital flow, as well as a decline in armed conflict episodes, all of which is in line with expectations. However, the rise in the mean number of new-MIDs-per-state/year while democratization increases is contrary to expectations. Developments at the regional level also provide conflicting evidence for the assumed relationship. Africa shows the most pronounced democratization and scores small increases in the economic liberalization indicators, but has an upwards trend in both conflict indicators. Asia sees increasing democratization matched with a fall in ACD episodes and a rise in private capital flow, but also records the reverse in the other two conflict and economic indicators. Europe and Latin American & the Caribbean both match

democratization progress with falling ACD episodes and rising economic indicators, but also a rise in MIDs. Eurasia is the only region to decline in both democratization indicators, and it scores badly in MIDs, but is also has improving scores in economic liberalization. Finally, the Middle East & Mediterranean shows a large increase in private capital flows and is the only region to show a decrease in both MIDs and ACDs, all in the absence of significant democratization progress. Broadly, therefore, there is more of a match between democratization and economic liberalization, than with conflict-reduction. The cases of Eurasia and the Middle-East & Mediterranean provide examples that may prove especially challenging for the rationale of democratic enlargement in that they show some positive strategic developments for the United States without democratization.

In that context, did US democracy promotion match positive developments in conflict-reduction and economic liberalization? One way to answer this is by looking at USAID democracy assistance, especially if indeed it has had an impact on democratization, as noted above. Table 4 shows the top 20 recipients during the Clinton administration (including 2001 for money appropriated by the administration). This is a reliable reflection of overall American DP priorities, and of the strategic importance attached to states considered in transition or newly established democracies. One initial point to be made is that even for these major recipients the trend in USAID assistance was not steady throughout. In half the cases at least, there were low levels of assistance until a surge was triggered. This applies to the Eurasian (excepting Russia and Ukraine) and Balkan states from 1999, but also to Egypt from 1995, Bosnia from 1996 and Indonesia from 1998. In South Africa, El Salvador and Nicaragua, by contrast, there was a decline after an initially high level of democracy assistance, reflecting changing US priorities. The remaining cases also recorded an uneven flow of assistance, usually receiving surges for a couple of years before assistance levels came down again.

Table 4. Top Recipients of USAID ‘Democracy and Governance’ Spending, 1993-2001 (adjusted 1995 \$m).

1	Egypt	230.01
2	Russia	224.68
3	South Africa	196.39
4	Haiti	192.69
5	Ukraine	143.92
6	Bosnia/Herzegovina	116.25
7	El Salvador	109.69

8	Indonesia	107.47
9	West Bank/Gaza	93.97
10	Kazakhstan	69.73
11	Bulgaria	65.80
12	Nicaragua	65.71
13	Poland	62.49
14	Albania	55.48
15	Armenia	51.98
16	Croatia	50.71
17	Guatemala	49.69
18	Georgia	49.57
19	Cambodia	49.16
20	Kyrgyzstan	43.40

Source: Source: Cross-National Research on USAID's Democracy and Governance Programs. (Reports and dataset available at www.pitt.edu/~politics/democracy/democracy.html)

To the extent that Russia was the centrepiece of the American policy of DP in support of enlargement, this seems to have yielded little in terms of the strategic goals considered here. During this period, Russia did not progress in the democratization indicators. It was involved in 45 new MIDs between 1990 and 2001, the highest number for any country other than the United States. It also showed no significant improvement in economic liberalization, even by regional standards. Therefore, in the case of Russia DP does not appear to have achieved much in supporting the goals of democratic enlargement. The other major strategic case here is Egypt, the top recipient of USAID democracy assistance for the period. It also made no progress in democratization during the Clinton years, under-performing even by regional standards. At the same time, it recorded one of the highest numbers of new MIDs for the region and was below the regional average on the economic indicators. The Egyptian case, therefore also casts strong doubts about usefulness of DP both towards democratization and strategic outcomes. The picture is not much better in the other strategically important state of Ukraine where, despite American engagement at different levels of DP and a steady expenditure in USAID democracy assistance, democratization did not speed up during the Clinton years. By regional standards, its performance in the economic liberalization indicators and in MIDs was not impressive. Looking at developments in the other Eurasian states in Table 4, there is no strong evidence for the assumptions of enlargement either. In all four, American DP, including USAID democracy assistance, was low until 1999 and 2000 when the Clinton administration turned its attention

seriously to former Soviet republics other than Russia and Ukraine. In all four, the economic side of enlargement finds some support with democratization performance broadly matching developments in economic indicators. But the security side of enlargement is contradicted. Armenia and Georgia were above the regional average in democratization but fared relatively poorly in the conflict indicators, while Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan were poor democratizers but scored better in them. The case of South Africa is more supportive of the claims of the enlargement, with clear American DP and a clear democratization improvement being matched by low conflict-involvement and a good performance in economic liberalization by regional standards. To a lesser extent this can be said for Cambodia and El Salvador. On the other hand, there is contradictory evidence against the assumptions of enlargement in the case of Nicaragua where relatively steady American DP and a strong democratization performance was matched by a high incidence of new MIDs – the highest in Latin America – and a relatively poor performance in economic liberalization by regional levels.

Not all important targets of democratic enlargement and associated DP were among the largest recipients of USAID democracy assistance during the Clinton years. In several cases, other DP means were more prominent. The Clinton administration's attempts to entrench democratization and US strategic advantages in Eastern Europe certainly count among its successes. Especially through driving NATO expansion, it helped achieve both by drawing former Communist states into the community of democracies and America's strategic orbit, meeting the goals of the strategy of enlargement. Washington used a wide range of policies from the DP scale to achieve this – diplomacy, institution-building, democracy assistance and support for political and economic reformers. It must be remembered, however, that another highly important factor was at play, namely the prospect of European Union membership and its attached conditionality. Yet here also there is conflicting evidence with regard to the assumptions of enlargement. The Eastern European cases produce no clear-cut evidence that democratization and American DP uniformly matched positive change in either the conflict or economic liberalization indicators. There is a proviso nonetheless because the recorded involvement of several Eastern European countries in MIDs during the period is attributable to their nominal participation in NATO operations and seems more the result of a data-coding methodological decision than of actual conflict-proneness.

It is also worth noting the case of China. Although the logic of democratic enlargement was not applied to it to any extent similar to Russia or other strategically important countries – for

instance, it received no USAID democracy assistance while Clinton was in office – the administration did at least hope that economic engagement would produce some desired strategic outcomes. Yet China exposed starkly the limits of attempting DP by diplomatic exhortation and economic linkage. In 1994, Clinton rapidly backtracked from attempting to leverage trade negotiations in order to obtain commitments over improving human rights. From then on, the administration more or less abandoned democracy and human rights rhetoric in relations with China. Yet, by the measures used here, this putative tool of enlargement appears to have had no impact. China showed no progress in the democratization indicators or in economic liberalization. Though it was not involved in any ACD episodes, like Russia it was one of the states involved in the most new MIDs (29).

And finally, it has to be noted that the Clinton administration also found out that America's preponderant military power did not translate easily into the freedom to use it in the pursuit of enlargement. Although such a course was hinted at in the 1995 NSS, the strict guidelines the administration set, the caveats regarding UN involvement and the primacy of domestic economic considerations made it unlikely that military power could ever be used consistently in support of enlargement goals. In the case of the 'backlash states' – specifically North Korea, Iraq, Iran and Libya – Lake had argued in 1994 that, 'As the sole superpower, the United States has a special responsibility for developing a strategy to neutralize, contain and, through selective pressure, perhaps eventually transform these backlash states into constructive members of the international community.'⁷³ The extent to which this did not happen in the following years indicates that the actual details of how it might be able to apply US military power to attaining the goals of enlargement had yet to be worked out.

5. Conclusion

As John Dumbrell argues, Bill Clinton's administration 'did find an integrating purpose in its commitment to the expansion of market democracy under conditions of accelerating globalisation'.⁷⁴ As a result, it oversaw a genuine, if often haphazard, effort to lay the foundations for an American hegemony based on the topical application and interpretation of traditional US liberal internationalist thinking, i.e. in terms of the democratic peace and of free-market globalization. It is in this context that the strategy of democratic enlargement must be evaluated,

⁷³ Anthony Lake, 'Confronting the Backlash States', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 2 (1994), p.46.

⁷⁴ Dumbrell, *Clinton's Foreign Policy*, p.41.

as a strategy of democracy promotion to achieve US national-interest goals. This paper has argued that, for all its persistent talk of democratization as a pillar of foreign policy, the Clinton administration gave insufficient thought to the challenges of implementing such a strategy – to what it meant in practice, what policies and instruments would be needed, and what the wider implications might be. If one takes a strategy as containing both goals and some notion of means, it appears almost as though enlargement was more an aspiration than a strategy proper – the call of American liberalism for more democracies in the world and for the United States to support this. Where the strategy could draw on previous American experiences in democracy promotion, it did find some guidelines for implementation. But in seeking ways to harness directly the spread of democratization to US security and economic interests, the strategy ran into trouble, which contributed greatly to its demise. As argued in this paper, even if evidence produced to show a supporting role for American DP in the processes of democratization around the world is accepted, there is no clear support for the claim that democratization helps produce the desired strategic outcomes that the rationale of democratic enlargement predicts. Moving on to the more specific and much more complex question of whether American DP helps produce such strategic outcomes by supporting democratization abroad, the study of the two strategic variables chosen here – conflict-reduction and economic liberalization – shows no consistent match with either democratization or DP. These findings therefore cast doubts about the rationale of the strategy of democratic enlargement, its usefulness in directing US foreign policy and ultimately strategic usefulness to the United States of democracy promotion, even if and where it does support democratization.